



CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

72-HOUR REPORT

14 FEBRUARY 2022

(U) CALIFORNIA

(U) Los Angeles – Nearly \$100 Million in Counterfeit Sports Merchandise Seized Prior to Super Bowl

(U) Nearly \$100 million in counterfeit sports-related items were seized at flea markets and retail outlets around Los Angeles in the lead-up to Super Bowl LVI, federal officials announced. More than 267,500 items, including fake jerseys, jackets, hats, rings, souvenirs, and tickets were seized as part of “Operation Team Player,” a joint effort involving US Homeland Security Investigations, Customs and Border Protections, the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, and the NFL, among other agencies. The items were worth an estimated \$97.8 million.

SOURCE: 11 February 2022, [Los Angeles Times](#)

(U) San Diego – Alleged Sinaloa Cartel Drug Trafficker Extradited from Ecuador

(U) Federal authorities on Friday extradited a 23-year-old Mexican man from Ecuador to San Diego to face charges for his alleged involvement in trafficking drugs for the Sinaloa cartel. Brayan Alberto Rodriguez Alcala is accused of being part of the Valenzuela Drug Trafficking Organization, according to federal prosecutors who called the organization “a significant component of the Sinaloa cartel.” Rodriguez Alcala is the first member of the trafficking ring to be extradited to the US as part of the long-running investigation and faces three charges involving conspiracies to import and distribute cocaine and a money laundering conspiracy charge. Rodriguez Alcala is named in an indictment against at least 30 people in which prosecutors contend he and others were involved in a large-scale conspiracy to traffic cocaine within the US, send guns and ammunition from the US to Mexico, and launder the scheme’s illicit profits.

SOURCE: 11 February 2022, [The San Diego Union-Tribune](#)

(U) San Francisco – FBI Warns of Rise in Bay Area Romance Scams

(U) The FBI San Francisco field office is warning the public about new trends in romance scams ahead of Valentine’s Day after the latest data shows romance scams are on the rise across the Bay Area. In 2021, complaints filed with the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) showed that victims within the FBI San Francisco division’s territory lost more than \$64 million to romance scams compared to just over \$35 million in 2020. IC3 received 742 complaints within the Northern District of California last year compared to 720 in 2020 and 526 in 2019. Romance scam victims were reported in every county within the FBI San Francisco division’s territory except one last year.

SOURCE: 11 February 2022, [FBI](#)

(U) SOUTHWEST BORDER

(U) Mexico – Mexican Army, FBI Coordinate Rescue Of 15 Individuals Including One US Citizen

(U) Nuevo Laredo – The Mexican Army rescued 15 people who were kidnapped in a safe house in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, media reported yesterday. The rescue took place on 7 February in the La Joya neighborhood, west of Nuevo Laredo. Mexican authorities, in cooperation with the FBI, carried out the rescue operation after receiving a tip about a safe house, where they found 15 kidnapped people inside, of which 12 were Mexicans, two were Hondurans and one was American. Paramedics provided medical

care to the rescued individuals and notified the National Institute of Migration. According to media reporting, the safe house belonged to the Northeast Cartel. The reason for the kidnapping is unknown, and Tamaulipas authorities are investigating.

SOURCE: 13 February 2022, [Debate](#)

(U) Texas – USBP Apprehended 43 Migrants In 2 Separate Incidents

(U) El Paso – El Paso Sector USBP agents disrupted two smuggling attempts and apprehended 43 migrants. The first smuggling incident happened on 7 February when Las Cruces Border Patrol agents assigned to the I-25 checkpoint encountered a U-Haul freight truck with 20 adult migrants crammed inside the cargo compartment. The migrants from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Peru and Columbia were medically evaluated, processed and returned to Mexico. The permanent resident driver was taken into custody. The second encounter happened on 9 February when Las Cruces Border Patrol agents working at the I-10 checkpoint inspected a white van with a daycare logo. The agents discovered 23 migrants from Guatemala inside the vehicle. The migrants were processed and returned to Mexico. The United States citizen driver was detained and will face charges.

SOURCE: 11 February 2022, [CBS 4 Local](#)

(U) NATIONAL

(U) Pennsylvania – Alt-Right Podcaster Charged After Machine Guns Found in Basement

(U) Bethlehem – Federal prosecutors have charged an “alt-right” podcaster who espoused strong anti-government views with assembling an arsenal of weapons, including machine guns. Joseph Paul Berger and his father Joseph R. Berger were arrested this week more than a year after US Customs and Border Protection and Homeland Security Investigations seized three packages containing firearm silencers that were being shipped from China to the Bergers’ home. A search of the home revealed 13 unregistered machine guns and 12 additional silencers. ATF confirmed that the weapons had been converted from semi-automatic rifles to fully automatic rifles. Prosecutors claim that the younger Berger, a US Navy veteran, regularly espouses anti-government and anti-law enforcement views, and has referenced Eric Frein, who ambushed a Pennsylvania state trooper in 2014. Berger also goes by the moniker “GlockDoctor1488” – 1488 being a popular coded signal among neo-Nazis.

SOURCE: 13 February 2022, [Washington Post The Morning Call](#)

(U) New York – NYPD Investigating Second Anti-Semitic Incident in Two Weeks

(U) Brooklyn – The New York Police Department’s Hate Crime Task Force is investigating after a Jewish man was reportedly punched in the face Friday, police said, marking the second weekend in a row the task force was investigating incidents against members of the Jewish community. Anti-Semitic graffiti was also discovered two weeks running. On Friday, a 22-year-old man was approached by someone asking for directions who then punched the victim in the face and fled the scene in a vehicle. Just over 10 minutes later and less than a mile away from the first incident, police say a 14-year-old reported being approached and harassed by the same individual. A second man in a van allegedly filmed the attack. The weekend prior, police said two Jewish men were assaulted in Brooklyn and a swastika was painted on a school bus. There have been no arrests in any of the weekend incidents, and police are still investigating.

SOURCE: 14 February 2022, [KTVZ](#)

(U) INTERNATIONAL

(U) Mexico – US Suspends Mexican Avocado Imports After Threat to US Inspector

(U) Mexico City – The US suspended avocado imports from Mexico's western state of Michoacan after a US official received a threat. According to the statement by Mexico's Agriculture Ministry, the US Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) decided to pause until further notice the avocado inspection activities in Michoacan after one of its officers, who was carrying out inspection work in Uruapan, Michoacan, received a threatening call to his official cell phone. It is not the first time that the violence in Michoacan — where the Jalisco cartel is fighting turf wars against a collection of local gangs known as the United Cartels — has threatened avocados. After a previous incident in 2019, the USDA had warned about the possible consequences of attacking or threatening US inspectors.

SOURCE: 14 February 2022, [Associated Press CNN](#)

(U) Turkey – Authorities Arrest 22 Suspected ISIS Members in Istanbul, Bursa Province

(U) Istanbul – Media reported Friday that Turkish authorities arrested 22 Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS) suspects in an Istanbul-based anti-terror operation. The suspects were accused of providing financial assistance to the terror group by collecting money as donations. During simultaneous operations conducted at 26 addresses in Istanbul and Bursa provinces, police also seized digital materials and organizational documents. One suspect is still at large, and efforts are ongoing to catch the individual.

SOURCE: 11 February 2022, [Yeni Safak](#)

(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.

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